



STAFF REPORT

Agency: City of Belmont

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Agenda Title: Report from Audit Committee Regarding Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015

Agenda Action: Receive Report

Recommendation

The Audit Committee recommends the City Council receive the financial reports and recommendations of the City's independent auditor.

Background

The Audit Committee is a practical means for Council to provide independent review and oversight of the City of Belmont's financial reporting processes, internal controls, and independent auditors. The Audit Committee also provides a forum separate from management in which auditors and other interested parties may candidly discuss concerns. By effectively carrying out its functions and responsibilities, the Audit Committee helps to ensure that staff properly develops and adheres to a sound system of internal controls, that procedures are in place to objectively assess management's practices, and that the independent auditors, through their own review, objectively assess the City's financial reporting practices.

For the year ended June 30, 2015, the reports include:

- Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)
- Measure A Special Revenue Fund Report
- Agreed Upon Procedures Report on Compliance with Proposition 111 (City)
- Agreed Upon Procedures Report on Compliance with Proposition 111 (BFPD)
- Memorandum on Internal Control and Required Communications

Analysis

The CAFR is a complex document containing a tremendous amount of information. From an oversight standpoint, the Audit Committee has been able to provide an independent review of the City's financial reporting processes and internal controls, and finds that the City is in good financial health and is maintaining control over budgeted activities. The City's General Fund ends with a \$9.0 million fund balance, of which \$5.6 million is unassigned and available for expenditure. The fund balance exceeds the \$5.0 million minimum reserve requirement.

The CAFR includes a Message from the Finance Director, which was inspired by GFOA's Popular Annual Financial Report Award Program, designed to provide readily accessible and easily understandable financial information to the general public and other interested parties without a background in public finance.

The CAFR is prepared by staff and has been subject to a state-required audit by an independent, certified and licensed auditor. As discussed above, the auditor has reported directly to the Audit Committee. On October 5th, the Audit Committee received the auditor's opinion, management letter and annual financial reports prepared by staff. Understanding the Audit Committee's personal responsibility as members and the duty to exercise an appropriate degree of professional skepticism, the Audit Committee met with the auditor and discussed the financial results, along with City management. The Audit Committee satisfied itself that the reports and related information were fairly presented, to the extent such a determination can be made solely on the basis of such conversations. The Audit Committee also determined the reports were comprehensive and adequately disclosed the financial position and results of operations for the City.

In addition, the Audit Committee formally received the reports and recommendations of the City's independent auditor, which are embodied in the Memorandum on Internal Control. The City's management has prepared a formal response to those recommendations. While the Audit Committee had the opportunity to discuss the audit and recommendations with the independent auditors in private, as well as privately amongst its members, it did not believe such action was necessary.

As prescribed by policy, the Audit Committee directed the Chair to transmit this report to the City Council. By doing so, the Committee is recommending that the financial reports and recommendations of the auditor are made public. Furthermore, in performing this function, the Audit Committee has discharged its duties and met its responsibilities.

As for discharging its other responsibilities, the Audit Committee makes the following comments:

1. The Audit Committee has reviewed its provision of funding. No changes are proposed.
2. The Audit Committee has considered and determined there is no need to retain a financial expert to assist in fulfilling its responsibilities.
3. The Audit Committee has reviewed updates to the best practices, which have been added to the City's financial policies.

With respect to the reports, the Audit Committee would like to draw attention to the following:

- The Independent Auditors have issued an unqualified opinion, which is the highest level of assurance possible.
- The Independent Auditors have also issued a Memorandum on Internal Control, which communicates to management, City Council, and others, control deficiencies with the design or operation of the City's internal controls over financial reporting. This Memorandum disclosed no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies.

The City of Belmont has a long history of being a best practice city and, as such, incorporates Best Practices and Advisories issued annually by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and from other sources into its Financial Policy. GFOA Best Practices and Advisories are written as a guide, and identify specific policies and procedures contributing to improved government management. They aim to promote and facilitate positive change rather than to codify current accepted practices.

Periodically, the Best Practices and Advisories will include new or modified recommended practices as they apply to the City, as is the case this year. The Audit Committee recognizes the importance of Best Practices in the design, operation and administration of the City's internal control system in discharging its fiduciary duty and, similarly to the reports discussed previously, recommends City Council receive the updates to the Financial Policy.

The Audit Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the City's management, and in particular, the Finance Department staff, for the information they have provided for the Committee to compile this report.

Lastly, the Audit Committee members stand ready to answer any questions with regards to this report.

Alternatives

1. Take no action.
2. Refer to staff with direction.

Attachments

- A. CAFR (previously distributed)
- B. Memorandum on Internal Control and Required Communications (previously distributed)
- C. Financial Policy Updates
- D. Transmittal Letter

On file and available in the Finance Department:

1. Measure A Report on Compliance
2. Agreed Upon Procedures Report on Compliance with Proposition 111 (City)
3. Agreed Upon Procedures Report on Compliance with Proposition 111 (BFPD)

Fiscal Impact

- ☒ No Impact/Not Applicable
☐ Funding Source Confirmed:

Source:

- ☐ Council
☐ Staff
☐ Citizen Initiated
☒ Other*

Purpose:

- ☒ Statutory/Contractual Requirement
☐ Council Vision/Priority
☐ Discretionary Action
☐ Plan Implementation*

Public Outreach:

- ☒ Posting of Agenda
☐ Other*

*Audit Committee